

## Knoll Statement in Solidarity with Black Lives Matter

7.29.2020

The Knoll condemns systemic racism and the unconscionable murders of Black lives. These injustices highlight the systemic racism entwined in every level of our lives and our human systems, ranging from policing, education, housing, healthcare, land tenure, and the conditions present (or absent) for self-determination that shape the very meals on our plates. The mission at the Knoll is to explore food as a medium to cultivate well being in people, place, and the planet. And if this is our true aim, our work must start with understanding and dismantling oppression, specifically the racism, land theft, anti-Blackness, and colonial supremacy that built our food system and our national economy from this country's outset.

We commit to creating access for people, especially Black students, who have been not only underrepresented in, but barred access from the freedom to choose whether, and how, to engage with agriculture and the land. This requires expanding and deepening our outreach and engagement, as well as active attention to create space for more voices. It also requires a clear-eyed understanding of the political, historical, and cultural frameworks and hegemonies, including white supremacy, that have built our predominant narratives and understandings of the food system and our landscape. We commit to holding space for student-led initiatives and to rallying staff and faculty support behind them, when called to do so.

We commit to utilizing the Knoll as a space for people to have nuanced and intentional conversations about food justice and how it intersects with systems of oppression, culture, and ideas of food sovereignty. This requires skilled facilitation and thoughtful framing, as so much of our relationship with food is rooted in deeply personal concepts of identity, culture, and memory.

We commit to centering the intersectional scholarship, leadership, and grassroots activism of food, land, and climate justice work. We commit to lifting up organizations that serve as national models for this urgent work, to grounding our understanding of our work in theirs, and to creating opportunities here at The Knoll for further meaningful connection and engagement.

These commitments are the soil in which the seeds of student interest can grow.